



Refer to: Request Number **2020-00013-A-OS**

November 13, 2019

Andrew Free
MuckRock News
DEPT MR 76961
411A Highland Ave
Somerville, MA 02144-2516

Dear Andrew Free:

This acknowledges receipt of your August 16, 2019, Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request, submitted to the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), FOI/Privacy Acts Division, a copy of which is attached for your convenience.

We received your request on **November 13, 2019** and have initiated a search to locate records falling within the scope of your request. If our searching units advise us that you have requested a voluminous amount of records that require extensive search and examination, my staff will contact you shortly to discuss your willingness to modify your request.

The FOIA requires that we respond to your request within 20 working days of its receipt in this office. Please note the following unusual and exceptional circumstances that will impact our response time: (1) we will need to search for and collect records from components and/or field offices external to this office; and (2) because we receive a very heavy volume of FOIA requests, we will process your request in line with our established policy of "first in, first out" case processing. If either of these circumstances prevents our office from responding within the 20 working day timeframe, we will utilize a 10 working day extension to process your request, as permitted pursuant to the FOIA. This policy is consistent with court decisions regarding FOIA's time limits.

The law authorizes us to collect fees for responding to FOIA requests and assume you are willing to pay any applicable fees for processing this request unless you have stated otherwise. If at any time the fee for processing your request is estimated to exceed \$250.00, we will send you an invoice for the estimated fee and suspend further processing until payment of the invoiced amount is received. If the estimated processing fee does not exceed \$250.00, we will send you an invoice for the actual fee with our response.

Please note the following:

If you believe we should expedite the processing of your request because the requested records are needed in light of a compelling need; i.e., an imminent threat to the life and safety of an individual; an urgency to inform the public concerning government activity (provided you are a member of the media); a deadline in litigation; a deadline for commenting on proposed regulations; or other urgent matters, you must ask for expedited processing in writing and provide to this office as much relevant information as possible. In line with 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(6)(E)(vi), you must demonstrate the compelling need in a statement certified to be true and correct to the best of your knowledge and belief. Attach any supporting documentation to your statement, including a court scheduling order if your request is based upon a litigation deadline. (Fax supporting documentation to the FOIA/PA Division at (202) 690-8320).

If your request seeks a waiver or reduction of the fees that we would customarily charge for furnishing agency records and your request does not contain sufficient information to enable us to determine whether a waiver or reduction of fees is warranted, you should provide such information to this office within 10 working days of receipt of this letter. In line with 45 C.F.R. § 5.45, such information must include a detailed explanation of how disclosure to you: (1) is in the public interest because it is likely to contribute significantly to public understanding of the operations or activities of the government, and (2) is not primarily in the commercial interest of the requester. I especially need to know how you intend to disseminate the information to the public.

When submitting this additional information, please refer to the case number listed at the top left-hand corner of this letter, and send it to:

FOI/Privacy Acts Division
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue S.W.
Room 729H
Washington, DC 20201

If you are not satisfied with any aspect of the processing and handling of this request, you have the right to seek dispute resolution services from:

HHS FOIA/PA Public Liaison
FOI/Privacy Acts Division
Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs (ASPA)
Office of the Secretary (OS)
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)
200 Independence Avenue, SW, Suite 729H
Washington, DC 20201

Telephone: (202) 690-7453
Fax: (202) 690-8320
E-mail: HHS_FOIA_Public_Liaison@hhs.gov

and/or:

Office of Government Information Services
National Archives and Records Administration
8601 Adelphi Road – OGIS
College Park, MD 20740-6001

Telephone: 202-741-5770
Toll-Free: 1-877-684-6448
E-mail: ogis@nara.gov
Fax: 202-741-5769

Any questions regarding the status of this request should be directed to our office at 202-690-7453.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brandon J. Gaylord".

Brandon J. Gaylord
Supervisory Government Information Specialist
and HHS FOIA/PA Public Liaison